

A

# REVIEW

OF THE

# STATE

OF THE

# BRITISH NATION.

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Thursday, October 20. 1709.

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**N**OR shall you blame me, however strange it may seem, if I tell you, that this very Clamour against the Exportation of Corn is a Party-Trick, and has a *Jacobite* Interest at the Bottom of it — I confess, It looks far fetch'd; but perhaps when it is set in a nearer View, it may not look so odly.

It is well known to all that understand any thing of the *Dutch*, that they scarce sow Corn enough to feed their *Cocks* and *Hens*, but that, generally speaking, their grand Magazine of Corn is in *Poland* and *Prussia*, together with a great Quantity they receive from *Britain* — It is also well known, that the *Dutch* generously, rather than politically, exhausted themselves last

Year for the Supply of the Armies in the *Netherlands*, and for the Relief of the great Cities in *Brabant* and *Flanders*, who depended upon us, and who suffer'd for Want of Corn; the Streams that us'd to come from *France* being stopp'd — It is also most evident, that the grand Supply from the *Baltick* is now effectually stopp'd by the Plague, which has so far spread it self at *Danzick*, and the Ports thereabouts, that the whole Commerce on that side is entirely interrupted, and the *Dutch* perfectly disappointed; nor have the States of *Holland* at this time any Place to depend on for a Supply of Corn, but *Britain* — The Supply down the *Rhine* being but small and uncertain.

Wouder

Wonder not then, that some People are so fond of stopping our Exportation of Corn to *Holland*; to straighten the *Dutch* would be a most acceptable Policy, and please as well as serve their projected Schemes of travelling the Confederacy. From hence comes the publick Cry of our Corn being exported, and Engrossers sending it abroad to starve our Poor—— If they can make this Cry popular, the Mob will do the rest for them; and a general Stop of Exportation must follow to please the Rabble; and prevent Tumults: *Whereas*, let the Thing be put right—— and let us see where the Cause lies, you'll find there's no Need to stop Exportation—— There's Corn enough in *England* to serve us and the *Dutch* too, and no Need of raising the Price at all—— The Want is only of having the Laws put in Execution against Engrossers, Fore-stallers, and With-holders, as mention'd in my last, and due Care to be taken to regulate the Prices of Corn in the Markets—— Corn is a publick Concern, and it both is and ought to be in the Power of the Magistrate to settle the Rates at which it shall be sold, to oblige those that possess it to bring it to the Market; and to prevent Fore-stalling and Engrossing: It is needless for me to repeat the several Statutes now in Force on that Head, nor can I quote them at this Time; being absent from the Statute-Books, but every Justice of the Peace can have Recourse to them.

The first Thing is to see and satisfy themselves, that there is really a Quantity in hand, that there is no Fear, no Possibility of Want—— All the rest is Cheat and Trick, and ought to be regulated by the Magistrate—— And my humble Proposal is this, That the due Enquiry into Quantity, and the putting the Laws in Execution against Fore-stalling, &c. be first done—— And if that does not answer, then 'tis Time enough to stop Exportation—— But that the stopping the Exportation may be the last Remedy—— and indeed if we were to consider our own Profit—— A Stop of Exportation of Corn ought to be the last Thing we should do—— since every Quarter of Corn, we can spare to send abroad, is so much

clear Gain to the publick Stock—— But much more so, when the Price is so high, as now It is like to be; every Quarter of Wheat, now exported, is as much Gain to the publick Stock, as three Quarters us'd to be in a Time of the usual Exportation—— And were all the Corn that is now in *Britain*, over and above our own necessary Supply, sent abroad, while the Price holds thus dear—— I make no doubt, it would furnish us with above two Millions *Sterl.* of ready Money; a Thing, which every Body must allow, would at this Time do us no small Kindness.

But, besides our own Profit, I make no Scruple to say, we ought to export it—— with Respect to the Necessities of our Neighbours, the *Dutch*—— We ought to help them to as we can spare, and it would be most barbarous in us to withhold Corn from them, while we have it to spare—— Nor can any Man say, we have it not to spare, because of the Dearth at this time. It is evident, we have it to spare—— And till there is a regular Enquiry made into the Quantity, it is absurd for any Body to say, there is no Corn to spare.

I remember a Time, when Corn being very dear in *England*, the same Humour prevail'd among us, as begins now to work here; and this was in the Years 1694. 95, and 96.—— And you shall have a genuine Specimen of your *English* Generosity by it—— Our wise P——t, who shew'd at that time by many Examples, that no Number of Men, however collected, are infallible—— Among the rest of their most wonderful Performances, for which some People call'd them a deficient P——t, they suffer'd themselves to be drawn in to stop the Exportation of Corn—— because it was dear—— tho' far from any Scarcity, but to require such an extreme Remedy—— In this Stop of Exportation, they had not the least Regard to the Distress of a Neighbour Nation—— who labour'd then under a terrible Famine of Bread—— And this Nation they have had Reason to shew more Respect to, since—— and who have on several Occasions deserv'd very well of us—— But particularly, since that in our uniting with them, I mean the *Sans*—— Now, Gentlemen, I am not going to rip up old Sores



Sores between the Nations—— I shall always be a Healer, not a Widener of Breaches among you—— But I remind you of this, merely to move you in the present Case——

The Scots had supply'd themselves with Corn from England for two Years before, and indeed that had almost exhausted Scotland of all their ready Money; England had got two hundred Thousand Pounds Sterl. by the Scots for Corn in about 18 Months before—— It is true, that this Supply did keep the Price of Corn in Scotland something moderate, and the Scots made shift to live——

But in the middle of this, we prohibited the Exportation of Corn in general—— And this struck the Scots into the greatest Difficulty imaginable. The Poor were perfectly distress'd; and the next Year's Crop failing also, a dreadful Famine follow'd, inasmuch that the young Men of 20 and 25 Years of Age would look like old Men of Sixty; and Hunger had to distress the People, that the most intimate Acquaintance could not know one another but by their Voices; Multitudes famish'd for Want of Bread, dropp'd down dead in the Fields and Streets—— And if I may take the modest Account there from Men of Probity and Judgment, above eighteen Thousand People perish'd in Scotland for mere Want of Bread.

The Distress may a little be gather'd by this, that the next Year after, which was 1698, when the Corn began to ripen in the Fields; the poor hungry People, not able to stay till it was ripen'd and gotten in—— would run into the Fields, and snatch it in the Ear, and eat it Green—— In such a manner as both spoil'd the Corn, and ruin'd the poor People, throwing them into Fluxes and Distempers, by which many Thousand dy'd the Year after.

It would be a Story too moving to tell you the Distress of Scotland, and what miserable Things the poor People fed on; how several People were found dead in the Fields with Weeds, and Roots, and Grass, and sometimes worse Things even in their Hands, and with the vilest of Things even in their Mouths.

And what was our Condition in England at that Time? It is true, Corn was dear,

but far from Famine; the Corn ye gave your Horses in the City of London only, would have kept the whole Nation of Scotland from Starving—— and yet your wretched Politicks chose rather to let your Neighbours perish, than to supply them for their Money, when you had it to spare.

We know not in England, what belongs to Famine—— And what is your Scattity, that ye now complain? It amounts to no more than this, that your fine Flower, your Manchester Bread, is short your Wheat is dear—— But can you pretend to want in England, while your Malt on one hand, and your Horse-Corn on the other—— Either of them, Articles that may well stop, before the Poor want Suffenance; takes up, and consumes an immense Quantity of Corn. France is a vastly large and populous Nation, and the Distress of the People there this past Year, has been very terrible—— The Barley, which in England is consum'd in strong Liquors; the Beans, Peas, and Oates, which our Horses have eaten, how would it have made that whole Nation swim in Plenty?—— And had they not been our Enemies, it had been infinitely our Profit to have spar'd it, and let our Horses, and those worst Beasts, our Drunkards, feed on something else.

These have been the Consequences of our precipitant Stop of Exportation—— And now we have a Set of Men as forward to stop the Exportation again, only in Hopes they shall distress the Dutch, and starve your Armies—— I know, it is probable, the Dutch would take it very unkindly, and indeed they would have very good Reason—— But I am in Hopes, the Distress would not precipitate them into a separate Peace with France, as the Promoters of such a Project seem to hope it would; on the other hand, I think, we need not, and indeed ought not, to try whether they will or no.

The Sum of the Matter is, we ought not to stop our Exportation of Corn—— but as we would blow up a House in a Fire-Time, as a last Remedy, after due Examination and full Satisfaction that we want Corn for our selves—— which at this Time indeed we do not.

Indeed.



Indeed there is one Sort of Exportation, which I wish were a little more regarded, and which, I am satisfy'd, has been considerably practis'd in these Islands; and that is an Exportation to France—— I am no Informer, neither is it my Business to name Persons; But the loading Corn in Britain and Ireland for Lisbon, and carrying it or being carry'd with it into France, is a Trade has been so frequent and so barefac'd, that I wonder, no farther Enquiry has been made into it before now—— This indeed is an Exportation we ought to watch for upon several Accounts—and it would be very hard we should clamour thus against Exportation of Corn to Holland, and at the same time it is manifest, great Quantities have been sent to France—— The very Ships have come back again loaden with the Produce of France—— I shall say no more—Those, whose particular Duty it is to examine these Things, will, I doubt not, watch against it more narrowly for the Future.

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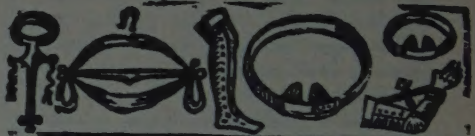
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